

GROUP WORK AND RECREATIONAL SERVICES WITH FIFTY OLDER PERSONS  
AT THE SALVATION ARMY RED SHIELD CLUB, CENTRAL HARLEM  
NEW YORK CITY FROM SEPTEMBER 8, 1951 TO MARCH 1, 1952

A THESIS

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Significance of the Study

Our aged population has increased tremendously during the last decade, chiefly because research in medical science and health education has added years to the life span of the individual. According to the 1950 Census, the present population of the aged was more than 12 millions, which was 8 per cent of the total population of the United States. There were in New York City area alone 7,891,957 aged persons past sixty-five and more than 800,000 past sixty.<sup>1</sup>

In a few of the cities of the United States, people are becoming increasingly aware of the acute social problems of the aged. The trend now in major cities is toward planning for the aged in order to provide better services.

When people reach a certain age, they are retired from their jobs whether they are still physically and mentally fit to perform duties required of them or not. This seems to have a psychological effect upon the individual inasmuch as he feels that he is no longer useful and about the only thing that he can look forward to is death. Since our society expects a person to retire at a certain age, then it is the responsibility of society to provide something for these people to do in this increased leisure time so that they may remain physically and mentally active--to keep them from reaching an "age of uselessness."

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<sup>1</sup>  
The World Almanac and Book of Facts, (ed.), Harry Hensen, New York: New York World-Telegram and The Sun, 1951, p. 439.

There were large numbers of older persons in Central Harlem for whom there had been no social planning except for those material needs which were met by Old Age Assistance, Old Age and Survivors Insurance, and Blind Assistance benefits.

Social planning has not kept pace with changing trends caused by the increased number of older persons. Problems associated with old age have been magnified due to the poverty of resources. Older people share with all human beings the need for certain fundamentals, such as economic security, health care, suitable living arrangements, satisfying occupation, and emotional outlets.<sup>1</sup>

While old age is a universal problem and many of the needs of older persons are fulfilled, and inasmuch as practically all of us can look forward to old age, these services need to be personalized. We must discover the individual old person and help him by developing our recreational program so as to take into account his individual personality. Practically all persons as they grow old sustain certain similar losses such as loss of family, loss of friends, loss of job and of income, but each person reacts very differently to such losses.

Old age offers too few compensations in our modern society. Loss of gainful employment means reduction in economic status, if not financial insecurity or dependency. Loss of spouse may lead to loss of home and prestige enjoyed as head of the house. Loss of friends and diminishing energy reduce social contacts. If independence is lost the parental role is reversed, and relationship with children, who gain a position of authority, causes frustration and conflict. The aged person must adapt to changing situations, and successful readjustment will be influenced by experiences in earlier life and by the extent to which difficulties and privations were overcome in the past. Present troubles are increased when the community offers no means of providing such essentials for the older person's well-being as adequate housing, medical care, as social channels for self expression.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Margaret W. Wagner, "The Aged," Social Work Year Book, (ed.), Margaret B. Hodges (New York, 1951), p. 44.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 44.

It is necessary to know how an activity program for the man who has just lost his job should differ from that for the man who has not worked for a long time. Most of the older people with whom we have contact have not been trained to utilize their creative capacities. They have had to work hard to earn a living and bring up a family, and have had little opportunity to explore their areas of competency in leisure time activity. In a recreational program, many of these capacities can be developed and utilized to give real, creative satisfaction to the older person. There should be a constant awareness that "only when we stress the value of the individual personality will older people come into their own."<sup>1</sup>

The Red Shield Club attempted to gear its activities to meet the needs of older persons participating in its recreational program. The focus, however, was not on the activities, but on the individuals and the interpersonal relationships of the group members.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to describe the administration of the total program for the aged at the Salvation Army Red Shield Club, and further to ascertain needs and interests of a selected number of older persons; to analyze recreation and group work services. Also, it was the purpose of this study to suggest further areas where more emphasis might be placed upon program development and individual participation with the older person.

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<sup>1</sup>

Lawrence K. Frank, "The Changing Social Scene," New Goals for Old Age, (ed.), George Lawton (New York, 1947), p. 49.



### Method of Procedure

The methods of collecting data for this study were the use of process records on one activity; personal interviews with the director and assistant director. Random sampling was used in making this study beginning with the first case in the group and every second case following, making a total of fifty. A schedule was used as a guide in interviews with the older persons. Observation of aged persons program in other agencies, interviews with staff members, and reading materials relative to the field.

### Scope and Limitations

This study was confined to the six months the writer was a student at the Salvation Army Red Shield Club and worked with the program for the aged. Only fifty of the 200 members who attended daily were included in the study. Process records were available only on the Senior Peoples Religious activity. The study was further limited in the number of professional workers to direct the program for the aged and sufficient space for activities.

## CHAPTER II

### ADMINISTRATION OF OLDER PERSONS' PROGRAM

#### Development of Program

Origin.--In the year 1943, members of the New York City Mission Society saw the need for a recreational program in Central Harlem for the older persons and established the Senior Women's Community Club. This club became a leisure time outlet for some 200 aged women. The Project was located in the basement of the Saint Phillips's Parish House in Harlem. It was financed by the Greater New York Fund and administered through the Young Women's Christian Association.

These older women met daily in the Parish House to sew, knit, crochet, quilt and "gossip" as one member stated. They also had discussion sessions and community singing of both hymns and secular music as part of their program. The number of aged women attending the Club outgrew the space made available for their activities, therefore, it was necessary to find larger quarters for their program. Consequently, the Central Harlem Council for Community Planning, the local regional council of the Welfare Council, became interested in the program and requested that the Salvation Army take over the Project since the Greater New York Fund was withdrawing its support. There were no men participating in this program at this time.

The Project was moved to the Salvation Army Red Shield Club in September, 1946. The staff immediately initiated a drive to recruit men as there was a need for recreational services to meet their needs too. In 1946, men were admitted to participation in the program and the name of

the Club was changed from "The Senior Women's Community Club" to the present name "The Senior People's Community Club," which included all older persons over sixty years of age.

Period of growth.--The Senior People's Community Club had grown from 200 members in 1946 with a daily attendance of 40 to 50, to a membership of over 1000 with a daily attendance of from 200 to 250 members in 1952. Since men constituted only 10 per cent of the Club's membership, a concentrated recruiting drive for men was in progress. The Red Shield Club, during its five years of service with the older persons' program, had developed into one of the largest recreational projects for the aged in New York City.

#### Intake

Eligibility.--Membership in the Senior People's Community Club was free and open to all persons, regardless of race, creed or color, over sixty years of age. The majority of the members, however, were beyond the age of sixty. It was recalled that there were 800,000 persons in New York City above that age.

Referrals.--The majority of the members of the older persons program was referred to the Red Shield Club by the New York City Department of Welfare. They were also referred by other members of the older persons' program, relatives, friends, doctors, ministers, hospitals, and health clinics. The worker referred the members to the New York City Department of Welfare, to the Social Security Board, to hospitals and clinics. In some instances it was necessary to refer the older person to agencies in his community as these services were more convenient for him to attend. The worker was able to recognize needs of such services through symptoma-

tic behavior, observation and interviews with the older person.

Registration.--Registration for the older persons' program was a continuous process. An applicant was permitted to register at anytime the program was in operation.

The Registrar filled out a five by eight registration card containing certain identifying data at the time of registration. During registration a new member was assigned a committee responsibility which immediately gave him some status. He was helped by the worker to select a committee whose functions were within his capacities and aptitudes. The worker of each committee was always careful to see that the individual responsibilities of each member stayed within his capacities, since the older person would immediately withdraw from an activity where his status was threatened or his security lessened.

Agency orientation.--The purpose of the Senior People's Community Club was interpreted to the individuals. This gave them an opportunity to understand more about the agency and its program for the older person before becoming a part of the group.

The program was in operation at the Red Shield Club Monday through Friday from 9 A. M. to 6 P. M. It was felt by the staff that Saturday programs were not needed at that time since most of the older persons used this day for their weekly shopping. On Sundays most of the members were in church. There was a small group who had services in the Club's Chapel on Sunday evenings at 8 o'clock. These services varied with different cultural groups.

The Self-governing Apparatus which included all of the chairmen and officers of the Committees of the Senior People's Community Club was responsible for the control of the group. Membership was terminated only

upon voluntary resignation or upon recommendation of the Membership Committee of the Self-governing Apparatus of the Program "The Senior People's Community Club."

### Facilities

Physical facilities.--The physical facilities of the Salvation Army Red Shield Club consisted of a large five-story brick building and two private house annexes. The older persons used the lounge and snack bar on the first floor of the main building; the game room and Chapel on the second floor; the Arts and Crafts Room and lounge on the third floor; and the entire fifth floor. The fifth floor contained the Club's Sky Room which had a stage and a seating capacity of seventy-five. The classroom, library and staff office were located on this floor, also.

The outside area used by the older persons was located in the rear of the building. There were no trees or grass as the space was paved. Consequently, it was necessary for the group to go to the parks for out-of-door activities when the weather was favorable. The group used the outside area for many of its activities in the summer and on days when the weather was warm. The older persons seemed to have enjoyed the out-of-door activities as they were exposed to the sun and fresh air. Some of the older persons needed to sit in the sun even on warm days because of poor health.

The rooms reserved for the older persons were light and sunny, and had toilet facilities. The chairs could not be too straight nor could overstuffed furniture be used, because its softness made it difficult for them to get up once they sat down.

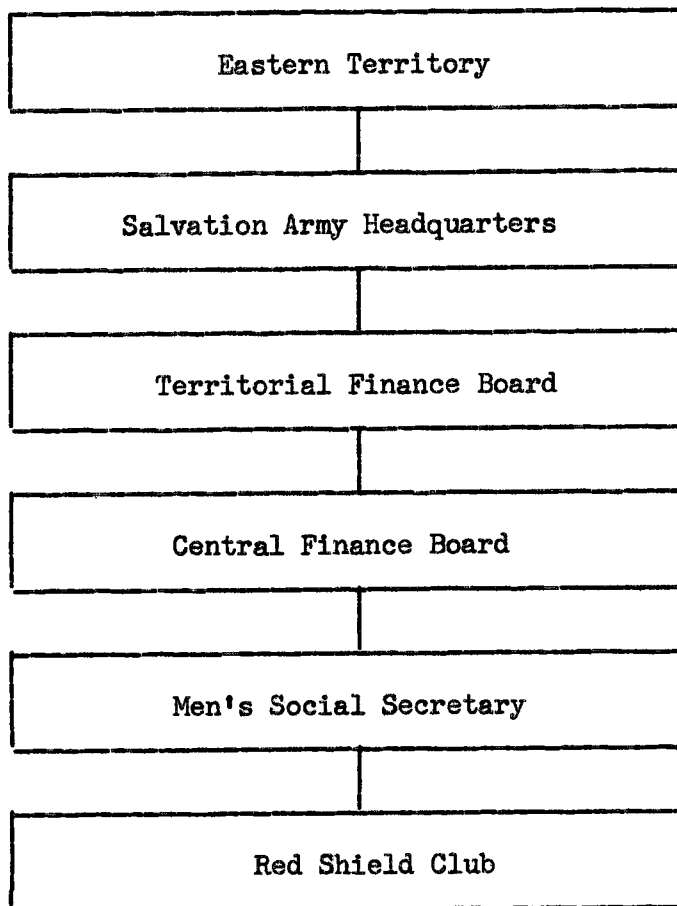
Equipment.--The Red Shield Club furnished all of the equipment for the older persons' program. Equipment in the arts and crafts room in-

cluded work tables built around the walls, chairs, two electric jig saws, one hand saw, leather-crafts, ceramics, chip carving, and woodworking tools. Also, there were cabinets for the storage of materials and display cases. The gameroom contained two pool tables, two ping pong tables, a miniature bowling alley, tables for quiet games, chairs, and an upright piano.

There was an elevator in the building which was used by the older persons to reach the fifth floor. An elevator operator was on duty during the time the older persons' program was in operation.

FIGURE 1

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE OF SALVATION ARMY



### Administration

The Red Shield Club was one unit of some sixty welfare health and religious services financed and operated by the Eastern Territory of the Salvation Army throughout Greater New York. The Territorial Finance Board which was composed of the top ranking officers in the Territory passed on all plans of the Red Shield Club.

The Red Shield Club was a special experimental project of the Salvation Army Central Finance Board and was directly linked to the Board through the Men's Social Secretary.

Administration at the local level followed a similar pattern. There was a local Advisory Board which advised and influenced the local Executive but followed the pattern set down by the Territorial Finance Board, the top Advisory Board. The Salvation Army Pamphlet describes the function of Advisory Boards in the following fashion:

Citizens Advisory Boards function in almost every town and city in which the Army has a center of work and are composed of leading citizens of the community; they form the link between the official organization and the public. They help in interpreting the aims and the purposes of the Army and in turn advise the Army Officers in matters of service to the community and review and endorse the local Army budget. These boards are particularly active in communities where the Army holds its own Home Service Appeal lending not only their influence but their active assistance in raising money.<sup>1</sup>

Personnel.--Staff for the older persons' program was trained professional workers, who had some preparation for working with older persons. This training was either from an accredited school of social work; gained from supervised school work in a recreational program for the aged using the group work methods or an intensive orientation by the Program Director or Supervisors of the Older Persons' Program prior to being given group leader assignments.

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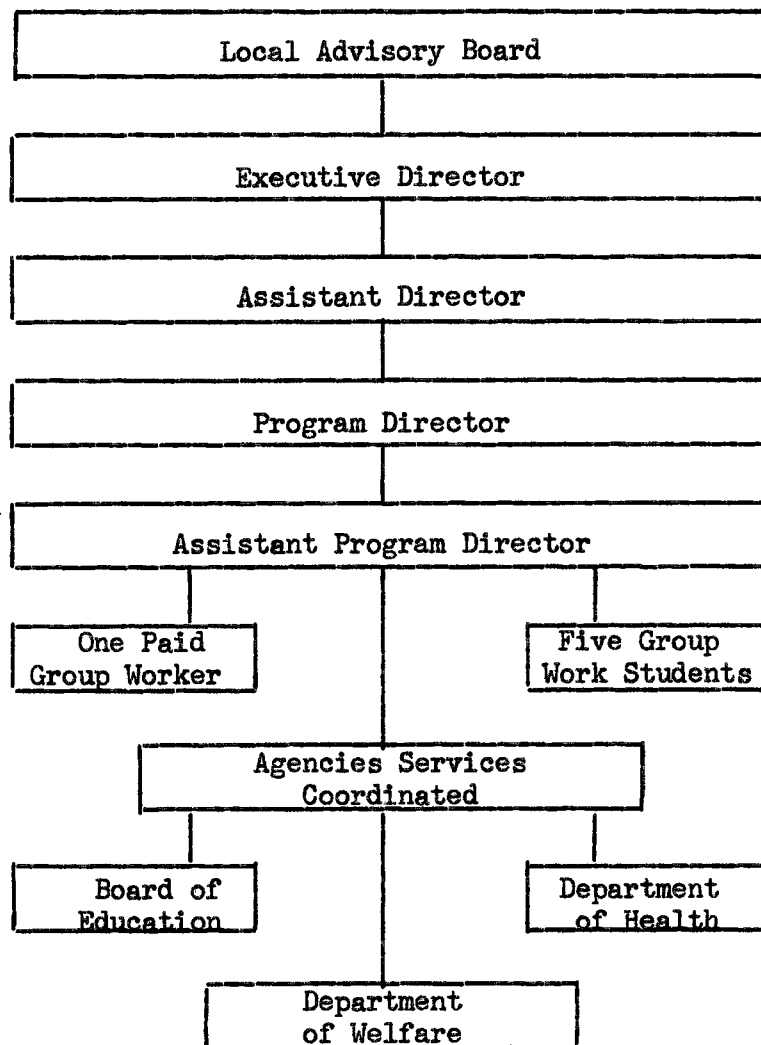
<sup>1</sup>

The Salvation Army Pamphlet, "Service," p. 15.

The group worker through his awareness of the opportunities available through both the activities of the program and the relation between people should be able to help the members fulfill their own purposes more thoroughly. This means that they should have more fun, deeper and more satisfying enjoyment, a chance to learn effectively, if that is what they are seeking, or in administrative groups a more effective planning and execution of their affairs. In all these aims of the group development of satisfying interpersonal relations will have a major part.<sup>1</sup>

FIGURE 2

## AGENCY STRUCTURE




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<sup>1</sup> Grace L. Coyle, "The Group Leader and Interpersonal Relations," Group Work With American Youth (Chicago, 1948), p. 119.



Advisory Board.--The Local Advisory Board was composed of a cross-section of the community which the Red Shield Club served. Its membership included physicians, lawyers, social workers, business men and women, newspaper people, ministers, salaried employees, government officials and labor leaders. The Local Advisory Board advised and influenced the Executive Director of the Red Shield Club.

Executive Director.--The Director of the Red Shield Club was a professionally trained worker with years of experience as an executive, Director for older persons program, and group worker. He worked directly with the older persons' program and had the final decision on all major problems initiated by the group.

Assistant Director.--The Assistant Director was also a professionally trained worker and supervised the students assigned to the older persons' program.

Case Worker.--The problems faced by the older person in the employment field were known to the Red Shield Club more through its participation with the Welfare Department's activities in this area than through its own experiences, since relatively few persons came to the Club who were physically able to work. "With one hand modern society does everything possible to extend the life of man, while with the other, it writes him off as useless because of the date on his birth certificate."<sup>1</sup>

The New York City Department of Welfare furnished one full time case worker who did the personal counseling, the supervision of the special la-

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<sup>1</sup>

Herbert C. Goodson, "Employment of our Elderly," Youth at Any Age, New York State Joint Legislature Committee on Problems of the Aging. U. S. Government Printing Office, 1948, p. 78.

bor force workers plus many of the administrative details of the program; one part time worker (two days weekly) who was in charge of the arts and crafts program; and a fluctuating number of special labor force personnel (public assistance recipients who earned their allotment by working a certain number of days each month commensurated to the current wage rate for their particular skill), who were maintenance workers, elevator operators, dramatics, arts and crafts, music and dance specialists.

Other leaders.--The Red Shield Club recognized the value of the various activities which fell in the scope of adult education as aids in helping older persons to accept, adjust to, and find satisfaction in their latter years. The Club saw a need for and supported any planning toward the extension of adult education for the benefit of the older persons. The New York City Board of Education was contacted in regard to this activity and furnished an adult education teacher for classes on Mondays and Wednesdays.

There was one part time worker from the New York City Health Department who came to the Club once weekly to teach a class in health. The older persons were shown health movies and allowed to ask questions and discuss each movie. The worker was able to interpret to the older persons the community resources available to them. This seemed quite helpful since the majority of the members had some type of health problem.

Group worker.--The group worker was a professionally trained worker with seven years' experience as a group worker and supervisor at the New York Children's Center. He was assistant program director of the older persons' program at the Red Shield Club and worked full time.

There was also one full time group worker who had had some training in group work. She supervised one activity in the older persons' program

which was the project in making pads and bandages for the New York Cancer Committee.

Students.--There were five graduate students participating in the older persons' program. These students were getting block field work experience which was a part of their professional training. They were assigned special groups and worked with the older persons' program in areas where they were needed. These students were supervised by the Director and Assistant Director of the Red Shield Club.

Lectures and discussion groups were held and the students were requested to attend professional group meetings to supplement their formal training and experience in social work. This was a part of the in-service training program for staff offered by the Red Shield Club.

#### Special Committees

Special interest groups in general were helpful to the older person in fulfilling essential needs, building close relationship, exchanging ideas, learning new skills, developing leadership qualities and developing creative self-expression.

During registration the older person was helped to select a committee responsibility. (See Intake) These committees met during the afternoon (two to four) program session during the month. The Program Director assigned leaders with special skills for each of these groups which were as follows:

Sponsoring Committee.--This committee was not composed of older persons but members of the community, who were interested in providing program materials and staff for the Older Persons' program for which the Red Shield Club's budget did not provide. Group work and community organiza-

tion methods were used by the Club's Director of Community Relations (the Director assisted by a student) in working with this group.

Executive Committee.--This committee was composed of the chairmen of all of the committees plus the officers. This committee met once monthly under the supervision of the Program Director of the Older Persons' Program. An example of how effectively activities were coordinated through this group was the manner in which Birthday Parties (which were held once monthly honoring the members whose birthdays fell in the month) were planned. The refreshment committee purchased, prepared and served the refreshments. The entertainment committee provided the entertainment, and the house and decorations committee prepared the physical facilities for the party.

The Executive Committee gave the group leader the opportunity to develop the indigenous leadership possibilities of all members of this group by making positive use of their positions as Club officers and committee chairmen. It also gave an opportunity to reassure and further gave confidence to the members holding leadership positions. No group needed this type of reassurance more than the older person.

The worker's aim is to help the members of groups develop the capacity to carry on their own group life; make their plans and decisions and carry them out. Groups vary in their capacity to function on this level, either because of the developmental period of the members, their state of emotional health, or their social knowledge and experience.<sup>1</sup>

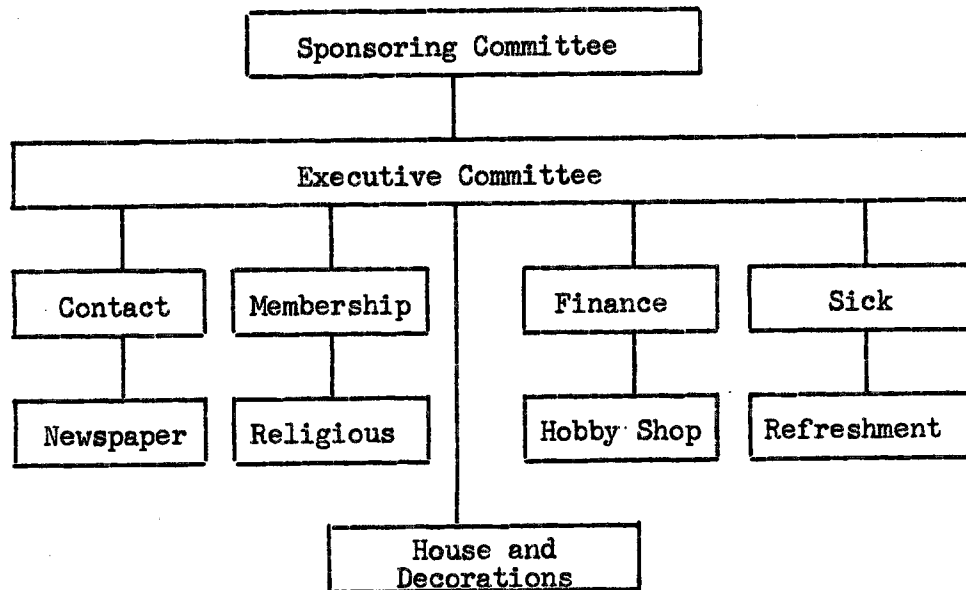
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Gertrude Wilson and Gladys Ryland, "The Social Group Work Methods," Social Group Work Practices (New York, 1949), p. 67.

FIGURE 3

## COMMITTEE STRUCTURE OF OLDER PERSONS' PROGRAM



Contact Committee.--This committee was composed of older persons who had an interest in and potentialities for public relations and interpretation. The committee would concern itself with interesting the public in the problems of the older person as it was recognized by the staff that the problems of older persons affected families, communities, and our total society and economy. The Club's professional worker with special skills in community organization was the leader of this group.

Membership Committee.--This committee was composed of older persons who were interested in obtaining new members in the Club. The membership committee was responsible for preparing the guest list for the "Open House" and checking the attendance. The committee, also, took charge of the follow-up program on non-members. The Men's Committee was concerned with the problems of the male membership, since older persons' membership was predominately female. The Assistant Program Director worked with this committee.

Finance Committee.--The Self-governing Apparatus which included all committees sponsored several successful affairs in which the ticket selling, and the arrangements were done completely by the older persons. Money raising became a regular part of the older persons' program, inasmuch as the success obtained seemed to strengthen the older persons' status and gave them recognition in their group as well as a club member.

The Red Shield Club's experience with the older person indicated that the charging of membership fees was not practicable for the older persons' program.

Sick Committee.--Because of the physical limitations of the average older person, the Sick Committee was always one of the more important committees of the group. This committee could absorb more members of the group than any other committee. Interest was maintained by discussion of techniques of visiting the sick members as well as sick friends of the members. The community was zoned. The members had districts and were responsible for visiting all of the ill members and friends who lived in their district. Other areas in which the committee functioned effectively were the responsibility for helping the refreshment committee purchase, prepare and serve at the monthly Birthday Parties, and other similar types of mass activities.

Newspaper, Religious, Hobby Shop, Refreshment, and House and Decorations Committees.--The newspaper committee was a special interest group in creative writing which served as the editorial board of the Older Persons' Program periodical. This periodical was published monthly, and given to the members. One of the student workers advised this group.

Religious Committee.--The Religious Committee was responsible for planning the weekly interdenominational religious services for the older

persons' program. This committee met once weekly to plan the program for the group's consideration. The committee gave the members an opportunity to participate in the planning of the program by bringing in suggestions to its members. The members of this committee were selected by the membership of the older persons' religious group. The writer worked directly with this committee.

Hobby Shop Committee.--The Hobby Shop Committee planned, set up and administered a Hobby Shop Program in the older persons program. This activity provided a sale outlet for articles made by the older persons in their needlecraft, fine arts and crafts sessions. Part of the proceeds of articles sold was given to the maker of the article, part to the Club and part for the materials used.

Refreshment Committee.--The members of the refreshment committee were older persons who were interested in foods and worked as domestics before retirement. This committee purchased, prepared and served the daily refreshments as well as the refreshments on various occasions when food was served. The Program Director worked with this group since the committee functioned daily in the preparation of lunch for the older persons and she was always present.

Entertainment Committee.--The entertainment committee planned and provided all of the entertainment at the various Club affairs. This committee was able to bring in outside talent to participate on its program. The Assistant Program Director worked with this group.

House and Decorations Committee.--This committee was composed of older persons who volunteered to decorate the rooms and lounges used in the program on special occasions. Also, the Sky Room had to be set up for lunch (the chairs and tables had to be arranged); the house and deco-

rations committee assumed this responsibility. The Assistant Program Director worked with this committee.

The student workers worked with the above committee whenever their services were needed.



## CHAPTER III

### NEEDS OF FIFTY OLDER PERSONS

#### Background

The membership of the Older Persons' Program was almost entirely of Negro background. Of the fifty older persons, forty one were women and nine were men. The majority of the members were Protestants with only four Catholics in the group. Their ages ranged from sixty-five to eighty-nine years. Twelve of the fifty members were foreign born and thirty-eight were native born. In the group of twelve foreign born older persons, their years in the United States ranged from twenty to fifty years. Thirty-seven members of the group were southern born and the number of years that the members of this group had resided in New York City ranged from three to sixty-three years. Only one person was born in New York City. Nine members of the group had no schooling; twenty-seven had completed grades three through eight; eleven had completed grades nine through twelve, two had two years of college training, and one had completed four years of college. Of the group of fifty older persons, forty-one were registered voters.

#### Living Arrangements

The majority of the members were recipients of old age assistance, old age and survivors insurance benefits, and lived alone in furnished rooms. Most of them were attracted to the Club because of loneliness and a desire for companionship with persons their own age whom they felt had problems similar to their own.

TABLE 1  
SOURCE OF INCOME AND LIVING ARRANGEMENTS  
FOR THE AGED

Source of Income	Total	Living Arrangements for the Aged		
		Alone	With Relatives	With Friends
Total	50	27	12	11
Old Age Assistance*	25	17	1	7
Old Age Assistance and Old Age and Survivors Insurance*	11	3	7	1
Old Age and Survivors Insurance	10	7	1	2
Needs Provided by Relatives	3	-	3	-
Blind Assistance*	1	-	-	1

\*Old Age Assistance, Old Age and Survivors Insurance and Blind Assistance will be referred to hereafter as OAA, OASI and BA respectively.

It can be seen in Table 1, that the highest incidence according to living arrangements is found in the group of twenty-seven of the fifty older persons living alone, and twenty-five of the total group received old age assistance. Only twenty-one of the group received benefits from covered employment, whereas, three older persons had their needs provided by relatives. Seventeen of the older persons lived alone and were supported by old age assistance, whereas, seven receiving old age assistance lived with others, and only one lived with relatives. In contrast for the twenty-one who received old age and survivors insurance, their living arrangements seemed fairly evenly distributed as ten lived alone and eight lived with relatives, and three lived with friends.

In evaluating the social problems of the aged, and in attempting to provide adequate living conditions and necessary physical care, we sometimes run the risk of forgetting, that we are dealing with a highly individualized group, the members of which have patterns of behavior and attitudes developed through a lifetime. Moreover, they have capacity for change and adjustment and with little help, financial or other service, can continue to live personally satisfying lives.<sup>1</sup>

#### Marital Status

In the group of fifty older persons, there were five widowers, two persons married but separated, one married, three single, and thirty-nine widows. Only four had children. This accounted for the older persons' desire to form satisfying interpersonal relationship through group participation.

The greatest single problem of old age is loneliness. Missing dear friends who are deceased is one aspect of this. In addition it is normal to feel that society no longer has need for one when the habits of work are broken. Idleness literally leads to deterioration. The process of getting old cannot be arrested, but it is possible to control conditions of loneliness and idleness under which time operates.<sup>2</sup>

#### Economic Status

The majority of the members were unskilled workers before retirement. There was no information available on their employment records since retirement, however, the table which follows revealed there was a low economic status.

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<sup>1</sup>

Ellen Winston, "Social Problems of the Aged," Social Forces, Southern Sociological Society, Knoxville, Tenn. (October, 1947), 57-61.

<sup>2</sup>

Our Senior Citizens, Program Aids, National Jewish Welfare Board (New York, 1946), 7.

TABLE 2  
AMOUNT OF INCOME AND LIVING  
ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE AGED

Amount of Income Per Month	Total	Living Arrangements		
		Alone	With Relatives	With Others
Total	50	27	12	11
Provided by Relatives	3	-	3	-
\$30.00 - \$39.00	2	-	2	-
\$40.00 - \$49.00	3	-	3	-
\$50.00 - \$59.00	13	7	2	4
\$60.00 - \$69.00	19	13	1	5
\$70.00 - \$79.00	8	7	-	1
\$80.00 - \$89.00	2	-	1	1

Table 2 pointed out that the highest incidence in the group of fifty older persons was nineteen persons who had an income of \$60.00 to \$65.00 monthly, thirteen of whom lived alone. All persons whose income was less than \$50.00 lived with relatives. An additional thirty persons had an income of \$50.00 to \$80.00, two-thirds of whom lived alone.

Some of the members felt that their income was inadequate to meet their needs, but were slow about discussing this problem too much. They felt that what they were getting would be taken from them if they made complaints. The worker was able to interpret the policy of the New York City Department of Welfare to the older person as it related to his financial needs. In some instances car fare to the club and hospital was included and the older person was not aware of this service. Also, if he

ate in a restaurant, and had his laundry done, this was included in his budget.

#### Other Needs Observed

The Red Shield Club recognized the importance of the older persons' program of activities being purposefully designed to enable satisfactions. Especially is this true when one considers many of the other observed needs. (Tables 3 and 4) Poor eating arrangements, wherein meals were not regular and diets were inadequate. For example: thirty-five of the fifty older persons prepared their own meals, ten ate at restaurants, and five had meals prepared by relatives or friends.

As older persons grow older there is a degree of illnesses that is expected and there were many disabilities that the older persons encountered, such as heart trouble, arthritis, high blood pressure, rheumatism, asthma, paralysis, diabetes, and gall bladder trouble.

TABLE 3  
SOURCE OF INCOME AND EATING ARRANGEMENTS  
OF THE AGED

Source of Income	Total	Eating Arrangements		
		Preparation of Own Meals	At Restaurant	At Home Prepared by Others
Total	50	35	10	5
Old Age Assistance	25	24	-	1
Old Age Assistance Old Age and Sur- vivors Insurance	11	5	5	1
Old Age and Survivors Insurance	10	5	4	1
None	3	1	-	2
Blind Assistance	1	-	1	-

In Table 3, it was brought out that the highest incidence was in the group of thirty-five older persons, of the fifty older persons, who prepared own meals. Twenty-four persons of the group of thirty-five were recipients of OAA. There were only ten older persons eating in restaurants, while five persons had their meals prepared by others in their own home. The writer assumed that relatives or others prepared meals for the family in the home. In this group of fifty older persons, forty-one were women with only nine men in the group.

An important implication of aging is that older people require financial support. Social Security, savings and private pension systems were acknowledged as the more important sources of support. Employment opportunities for older workers should be considered.

The family constitutes the basic frame of reference for successful aging, but family life has undergone many changes. New types of housing, varied services, and counseling may be needed if the aging and their families are to make a satisfactory adjustment.<sup>1</sup>

There were older persons in the group who made use of counseling as it related to their family situation. Some of them had feelings of frustration and anxiety about having to assume a subordinate role since living in the home with their children, and being solely dependent on them for their needs. Such problems were presented as needs in parent-child relationships as well as unsatisfactory relationships with in-laws.

The disease of highest incidence in Table 4, was heart trouble, found among fourteen older persons; eleven persons had arthritis, and eight persons had high blood pressure.

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Clark Tibbitts, "The Conference on Aging," Public Welfare, The Monthly Journal of the American Public Welfare Association (October, 1950), 186.

TABLE 4

THE AILMENTS AND PHYSICAL CONDITION  
OF THE AGED GROUP

Ailments Among the Aged	Total	Physical Conditions		
		Good	Fair	Poor
Total	50	8	28	14
Heart Trouble	14	1	7	6
Arthritis	11	6	3	2
High Blood Pressure	8	-	7	1
Rheumatism	5	-	4	1
Asthma	5	1	3	1
Paralysis	2	-	-	2
Diabetes	4	-	3	1
Gall Bladder Trouble	1	-	1	-

Of the group of fifty older persons, twenty-eight's physical condition was indicated as fair, whereas, fourteen were poor and only eight good.

The older persons because of his physical condition was able to participate in sedentary games such as dominos, bingo, checkers, cards and reading.

Gradually but inevitably the adult slips into old age. This period is characterized by marked physical, intellectual, and emotional changes, varying in degree with the individual. Because of change and deterioration of some of the bodily tissues, the old person has a lower resistance. In speed of movement he exhibits a general slowing up, although he still has the ability to perform and to acquire new knowledge and skill, provided speed and energy are not required to a great degree. Memory for recent events may be affected although the past remains vivid.

Developments in recreational groups for the aged bring out several pertinent points. The old person's preoccupation with

self lessens when he has an opportunity to know other people with whom he can talk and participate in activities; his former skills in activities come to the front and he is able to teach these skills to others; he is able to learn new skills provided he is not hurried or rushed; he can function on committees, participate in decision-making, and carry out responsibilities.<sup>1</sup>

For the older person there was need for available health resources and the worker made the necessary referrals to clinics, hospitals and nursing services as well as to the City Department of Welfare.

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Gertrude Wilson and Gladys Ryland, "Factors of Individual and Group Difference," Social Group Work Practice (New York, 1949), 113-114.



## CHAPTER IV

### OLDER PERSONS SERVICES

#### Recreation and Group Work

As recreation was known to the older persons at Red Shield Club, it consisted of a wide variety of recreational opportunities including such major activities as games, music, dramatics, arts and crafts, hobbies, social affairs, outings and special events. Brightbill says:

Recreation may be defined as leisure-time activity engaged in for its own sake. It includes all of the things which an individual chooses to do in his free time and can be identified only by the motivation behind it--satisfaction in doing. In present day society it is recognized increasingly as an effective medium for creativity, and self-discovery for all ages.<sup>1</sup>

The Red Shield Club had for its objectives in working with the older persons:

(1) the promoting of the social and economic adjustment of the older persons through activity, (2) to make possible for the older persons the maximum use of capacities least impaired, and (3) to promote community usefulness by having the older person fit to participate in voluntary programs in the community.<sup>2</sup>

The older persons participated in some of the same type of gameroom activities as the youngsters. They liked to play pool, miniature bowling, square dance and stunts as well as the sedentary games such as bingo, checkers, dominos, and cards. The worker had to work much harder to build and maintain relationship although all of the goals of group work that were

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<sup>1</sup> Charles K. Brightbill, "Recreation," Social Work Year Book, (ed.), Margaret B. Hodges (New York, 1951), p. 423.

<sup>2</sup> Walter Roark, "Older Persons Program at the Salvation Red Shield Club," New York Salvation Army Red Shield Club, 1949 (mimeographed), 9.

applicable to game room activity with any other age group were accomplished with the older person in this setting.

Coyle says:

One of the confusions which have troubled those engaged in the field of recreation or informal education is the relation between recreation and group work. It would seem the clearest definition lies in the acceptance of recreation as functions to be performed or services to be rendered and group work as one method of fulfilling those functions.<sup>1</sup>

Trecker says:

Social group work is a process and a method through which individuals in groups in social agency settings are helped by a worker to relate themselves to other people and to experience growth opportunities in accordance with their needs and capabilities. In social group work, the group itself is utilized by the individual with the help of a worker, as a primary means of personality growth, change and development.<sup>2</sup>

Wilson and Ryland say:

We see social work as a process and a method through which group life is affected by a worker who directs the introductory process toward the accomplishment of goals which in our country are concerned in a democratic frame of reference.<sup>3</sup>

From the three definitions the writer attempted her analysis of group work possibilities in the Red Shield Club. First to be considered was the physical setting, which in the writer's mind was conducive to good group work practice with the older person. The club had many facilities which were lacking in many other agencies, such as an entire floor for the older persons, a Chapel, arts and crafts room, game room, Sky Room or lounge, and smaller rooms for varied activities.

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<sup>1</sup>

Grace L. Coyle, Group Work Experience and Democratic Values (New York, 1947), p. 69.

<sup>2</sup>

Harleigh Trecker, Social Group Work Principles and Practices (New York, 1948), p. 18.

<sup>3</sup>

Op. cit., p. 61.

Secondly, staff was considered in carrying out a group work program. Under the present setup there was not enough staff for the number of older persons participating in the program at the Red Shield Club for an effective group work program, but enough for a recreational program wherein older persons were scheduled for activities by the Program Director more so than to their own particular interest or choice. The student workers worked with many of the older persons' groups during their training in the Club. Also, there was not enough floor space for the number of older persons served.

Group work was practiced at Red Shield Club successfully because the older persons voluntarily aligned themselves to the club in groups in an informal manner utilizing their leisure time. The club stated as one of its fundamental objectives the individual and social development of persons and groups as a means of building toward a society which became increasingly democratic, therefore, the group work method was a prominent tool used in carrying on its work.

Game room activities were referred to as "mass activities" in working with this group. Mass activities in a group work program was best described as the grouping of a large number of individuals around a specific interest. This "mass activity" type of grouping provided leisure-time experiences which were largely recreational. These large groups were composed of many smaller groups which were particularly important to the older persons' program as older people, particularly because of their tendency to be shy and withdrawn, needed contact with large as well as small groups.

Growing old was very important to the older person as he had not given it too much consideration before coming to the Red Shield Club. Very often when the members of the group were able to express themselves in discussion

or testimonial meetings, the majority would include in their remarks, "I did not know people my age could have so much fun before I started coming to "Red Shield" and "... let me grow lovely and graceful growing old, as so many fine things do." Laue says:

Recreation is an extremely important aid to growing older gracefully. People who stay young today despite their years do so because of an active interest that provides satisfaction through participation. There are six needs which older people have in common with all other people. The need for belonging, which finds expression at every age. The need for self-expression--for productive and creative activity; for health--both physical and mental; for new interests and appreciation; for recognition; for participation in the community life, and for an opportunity to contribute to society. It seems clear that recreation has the possibility of playing a large role in meeting any or all of these needs. The fact that, in the later years, usually a greater amount of leisure is available for doing things for the joy of doing them gives added importance to the role of recreation.<sup>1</sup>

Program activities planned around special kinds of needs, interests, and experiences had definite value for the older persons. They helped to develop tolerance and understanding through supervised interaction, particularly helpful in different cultural and religious groups. Game room and lounge programs were valuable for informal cheerful fun producing activities and as a creative meeting place for organized and unorganized activities.

The older persons participated in the following activities at Red Shield Club:

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Helen Graves Laue, "Recreational Needs and Problems of Older People," Planning the Older Years, (ed.), Wilma Donohue and Clark Tibbitts (Ann Arbor, 1950), pp. 97-99.

TABLE 5  
ACTIVITIES PARTICIPATED IN BY THE OLDER PERSONS

Activities*	Number of Older Persons Participating
Film Forum	44
Birthday Party	41
Religious Services	34
Game Room Activities	34
Community Singing	33
Current Events	31
Needlecraft	28
Arts and Crafts	24
Dramatics	14
Fine Arts	13
Poetry Reading	12
Creative Writing	11

\*The daily activities were needlecraft and game room activities; bi-weekly arts and crafts; fine arts and creative writing; weekly poetry reading, film forum, current events, dramatics, community singing, and religious services; monthly birthday party; and yearly open house.

Table 5 pointed out the number of older persons participating in the various activities of the older persons' program. Clearly this table showed that the highest incidence of forty-four attended the Film Forum, whereas, forty-one attended the Birthday Party. While thirty-four attended the Religious Service and also the game room activities, and thirty-one current events.

The older persons participated in the following activities at Red

### Shield Club:

Arts and crafts.--These classes were held twice weekly in the Club's Crafts Room. Examples were placed on creativity and self-expression through the media of ceramics, leather crafts, shellcraft, metalcraft, and woodcraft during these sessions. In arts and crafts, feelings, emotions and ideas were expressed and transformed into concrete objects. Through this media latent talents were discovered and developed. The older persons were psychologically helped to relieve body tensions. Resourcefulness was learned, and appreciation of their own culture and that of other people was encouraged through creative arts. The care of tools, and regard for safety devices were strengthened. All phases of creative arts were found to be excellent media for the older person to relieve the tensions, insecurity so prevalent to him, and to gain status which was so important to him.

Needlecraft.--This activity was held once weekly. The worker who acted as coordinator was the Director of the older persons' activities, since there were several small interest groups each with an indigenous leader in this session. The needlecraft activity consisted of knitting, quilting, waste paper materials, tatting, crocheting, sewing, and artificial flowers. There was also a group who made pads and bandages for the New York Cancer Committee. The older persons were attracted to dressmaking by a desire to gain some proficiency in sewing, darning, hemming and fitting. The worker, a skilled dressmaker, was able to give individual help and instructions to the group in accordance with the older persons' needs and interests.

The interpersonal relationship was strengthened inasmuch as the older persons were able to assist each other in this activity and they worked in

small groups which enabled them to become better acquainted with each other.

Fine arts.--The members of the older persons' group obtained group experience in creativity with painting in oils, crayon or charcoal, sketching, finger painting, etching, portraiture and murals as the media. The worker was qualified to give expert help in techniques to the members of the group, the majority of whom had never painted before. The group was taken on trips to art galleries and museums and had group discussions on arts as a media of expression as part of its activity. The older persons enjoyed taking trips and were able to get new experiences from going to the art galleries and museums, seeing what other people their age were doing.

Poetry reading.--Once weekly poetry reading was held. This activity gave the group a cultural experience. Original poems by members of the group as well as poems by other authors were read aloud, interpreted and discussed by the group. This gave the older person an opportunity to express himself in writing as some of the older persons refused to talk unless it was absolutely necessary because of being shy and sensitive.

Creative writing.--The members of this group were responsible for "The Senior People's Journal." All of the technical work in preparation to its publication, including editing, writing of new stories and original articles. The mimeographing and the assembling of the final publication were done by the older persons. These older persons were the members who had the highest educational training and who had feelings about not being able to work and do for themselves. This activity gave them a feeling of usefulness and recognition and they were able to relate to the other members of the group.

Film forum.--The worker used films, slides, and other forms of visual aids to develop this part of the program. Care was exercised in the selection of material based on indicated levels of interest among the older persons. A full two hours of motion picture material were held periodically. The material was decided by the Executive Committee who controlled the dates of all the Friday General Sessions. Movies had their values in broadening of knowledge, interpretation and the development of excellent discussions on a variety of subjects through Film Forums.

The older person seldom went to commercial movies because of the hustle and bustle, the competition for seats, and poor eyesight. All of these factors were taken into consideration in planning movies for the group. The subject matter was carefully chosen and there was a discussion period which followed the showing of each film. Subject matter was never on such subjects as war, invasion or physical illness all of which tend to depress the older person. The group work method was kept in movies as a program activity by means of making this activity a "Film Forum" rather than straight escapist entertainment.

Current events.--During this session the leader developed discussions based on current happenings using his skill and techniques to obtain good "give and take" discussions among the older persons, rather than simply an informative lecture by the leader each week.

Dramatics.--The members of this group were able to get a well rounded experience in dramatics which included acting, makeup, stagecraft, stage management, and costuming. The worker had to use special skills to preserve status and dispel competitive activity by the members of this group. Dramatics gave the older persons an opportunity to express their feelings both of love and hostility. Also, it provided them with an opportunity to



work out solutions to problems which they could not do in real life. These solutions helped the worker to discover some of the needs of some of the individuals in the group.

People either like or dislike dramatic expression intensely, and the social group worker often finds it difficult to help members--especially of older age-groups--feel at ease in this medium in the beginning. There are always some who enjoy being the center of the stage and taking part in plays, but they are not necessarily the ones best able to interpret character; in fact, they often "play themselves," no matter what the character is like, and need a great deal of help if they are to forget themselves and become the person in the play. Those members who hesitate to participate in dramatics often would like to do so, and they need a different kind of help--<sup>1</sup> help to express themselves and their feelings through this medium.

Community singing.--Music in its form of instrumentalization, individual and group singing, encouraged a sense of belonging (so important to the older person), fostered an appreciation of all types of music and presented valuable opportunities for group cooperation, active responsibility and creativeness for individual members. The best use of this activity was at the choral singing level which took the form of community singing.

After building a workable relationship with the group, the leader was able to use informal education methods to teach the group grammar, manners, current events, history and other subjects during the community singing activity; and yet maintained the interest of the older persons, whose interest had a tendency to wane commensurate with the shortness of his memory span, in singing.

Friday was a special event day in the Older Persons' Program. The members of this group looked forward to these programs as they were encouraged to invite their friends. Some of the special events held on Friday were:

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<sup>1</sup>

Gertrude Wilson and Gladys Ryland, op. cit., p. 285.

Birthday party.--Once monthly birthday parties were held for the members whose birthday fell in the month. He was an honored guest and received a gift during the special ceremony. This activity gave the older person recognition and a feeling of belonging which was very important to him. Some of the members were not able to remember having a birthday party and would always look forward to this activity.

Open house.--Periodically open house was held as a recruitment activity. This activity was planned by the Executive Committee, who also decided the date it would be held. Non-members, who were eligible by age for this group, were invited to the program. There were exhibits of needlecraft, arts and crafts, and pictures of the older persons' activities prominently displayed. The older persons always made an article to put on display and when favorable comments were made about their articles they seemed to appreciate what they had been able to do, and there was a closer relationship to the Club on the part of these older persons.

The Senior People's Religious Group was formed in 1946 by the Director of the Club. This was an interest group. Membership in this activity was open to all of the older persons regardless of race, color or creed, consequently, the meetings were always well attended. Since older persons registered as individuals, group formation of large numbers of persons from different cultural, religious and racial background, became the responsibility of the Club. Each individual was unique in his capacities and needs, his interests and emotional drives. His personality had already taken shape in patterns of aggressive or submissive behavior, in capacity for love and hate, in intellectual interests, and in many unconscious needs which determined how he made use of any group experience. One of the prime

roles of the group worker was to help an individual broaden his own skills. Sometimes this was done in a marginal interview. In another instance the group worker made use of the group in helping the individual gain new knowledge and skills. In the case of Mr. K., wanting to develop his skills in reading, worker used the group to lend support and also found it necessary to limit the group when opportunity to develop Mr. K's skill was disturbed.

Mr. K., a six footer, weighing 300 pounds, was always alone in the club. He always sat reading or looking at a book or paper while in the Club. The worker observed his behavior on several occasions while showing the group movies. One morning while waiting for the members to assemble, worker talked with different older persons. On speaking to Mr. K., he stated "I want to talk to you sometimes when you have time." The worker asked if he wanted to talk now. He sat looking down and stated, "Yes, I want to come to the services in the Chapel, but I can't read much. I only went to about the third grade." The worker smiled and said, "There are many people who can not read who attend the services and you should feel free to come down at any time." Worker asked Mr. K. if he attended the classes in the Club. He said, "No, I went one or two times and stopped." Worker suggested that he begin classes again. He said he would. Mr. K. came down to the meeting that afternoon early. Worker greeted him and offered him a seat near the front of the room. He sat near the back of the room. During the service, Mr. K. attempted to read a passage of Scripture and when he hesitated over a word the members of the group helped him. He stated, "Don't rush me, I can read, too." At this point the worker suggested that the group allow each member an opportunity to participate in the service as he wished and only help when the person asked their assistance. Mr. K's face brightened up and he continued to read. When he came to another word that he could not pronounce, he said, "Teacher, what is that please?" After the meeting, Mr. K. stated he had enjoyed the meeting and he would come back the following week.

The older person was not only slow, but often had poor vision and was sometimes partially deaf. He again demonstrated his tendency to drop out of anything which impaired his security and status by not being able to accomplish a task.

Another important concept was that of enabling people to help themselves as at Red Shield Club where there was a Self-governing Apparatus composed of chairmen and officers of many committees. This gave the older

person an opportunity to strengthen his own insecurity and build a relationship with the Club through the leader of the committee with whom he was working. The following is an example of the religious program in motion:

There was a religious program committee which met once weekly and planned the program for the group. This committee consisted of sixteen members (seventeen including the president of the group). The committee brought the plans to the group for approval or disapproval. Every time the committee met, Mrs. G. would say, "I will lead the devotions next week." Mrs. P. said "Do you think you have to lead every week?" Mrs. G. said "No, but if no one else wants to, I will." There were other comments from other members which indicated that the group did not approve of Mrs. G.'s suggestion. The worker suggested that the committee include all members on the program, then if any one refused members who had participated previously could serve again. The committee accepted the suggestion.

In this group the worker was able to individualize each committee member and help to move each toward adjustment to members of the group. Many of the older persons had existed without any satisfying group experience for long periods of time and this was a new experience for them.

The older person was unable in many instances to verbalize or manifest his needs and interests until he had gained some status and recognition in one of the clubs or special interest groups. Through small group interplay there developed a supportable relationship of the more articulate members.

Mrs. E. who was chairman of one of the services said to one of the members, "Mrs. U. stand up and tell the group how the Lord has blessed you." Mrs. U. was a very shy, withdrawn person, became red in the face and shook her head indicating that she did not care to participate. Mrs. Z. insisted that Mrs. U. just "say a word." Mrs. U. continued to blush and shake her head. The president then stated "I feel that the chairman should not call names but allow members who want to participate to do so if they so desired." The group gave its approval by nodding of heads and "Amens". Mrs. U. stated after the meeting that "she had lost her voice five years ago and it was just coming back, consequently, she did not like to try to talk in public." Mrs. Z. heard her and stated "that's the reason you should thank the Lord for being so good to you." Mrs. U. does not talk too much at any time but always takes the leading part in plays providing she does not have to do very much talking but acting instead.

After the older person had established relationship with the worker and with other members of the group, his drive for participation in other activities was often greater than his physical abilities. The worker often had to make positive use of the relationship he had built up with the individual to curb his enthusiasm.

### Counseling

A great majority of the older persons had a need for personal attention. They used all kinds of excuses to have an opportunity to talk to the worker, such as imaginary problems and ailments, and help in filling out forms which they could have managed. There were also large numbers of older persons who had problems which had great significance for them no matter how small they seemed to be. The scheduling of time for this activity enabled worker in this program to further strengthen relationship with individual members.

Although the Program at the Red Shield Club began at 9 A. M., the bulk of the members did not arrive before noon. The morning hours were used for personal counseling where the worker assigned to this responsibility was "available" to the membership for any personal problems they needed help with. This worker had both case and group work skills, as well as experience in working with the older person which enabled her to determine what was real in these conferences and what constituted an individual member's desire for attention as status getting. The average older person came to the program with a definite feeling of rejection and uselessness. The worker used the personal counseling period to dispel a great deal of the emotional tension characteristic of the older person.

The counseling services at the Red Shield Club included Family Re-

lations, Financial and Health Problems.

Family relations.--The majority of the older persons lived alone, therefore, they did not have too many family problems as they lived alone. Although, it was necessary to discuss their living arrangements since so many of the older persons lived in buildings that were poorly heated and badly in need of repairs. The worker was able to refer the older person to real estate agencies who had better living accommodations to offer. If they were able to find better living quarters, then the worker attempted to help them get an increase in budget to take care of this extra expense.

Finance.--Many of the older persons stated that their income was inadequate but they were reluctant to discuss this with worker as they felt that what they were getting would be taken away from them. (When the writer interviewed the older persons for this study, the members of the group wanted to know if they were going to get an increase in their budget or if they were going to be cut off from getting assistance.) The worker was able to refer the older person to the City Department of Welfare and in many instances he was able to get an increase in his budget for car fare, laundry, and even for rent and food.

The worker discussed the advantage of planning menus, wise purchasing of food, the better places for purchasing food and other necessities as a part of efficient financial management.

The client must be aware of need for counseling because of some practical problem or emotional discomfort from which he wants relief, if the counselor is to work effectively with him. If at first the client comes to the counselor because sent by someone else, the counselor's first task is to help the client recognize

his discomfort and wish for help in relieving it. Progress is likely to be made in counseling only after the client comes to see that he is partly responsible for the difficulty.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>  
Donald E. Super, "Guidance and Counseling," Social Work Year Book  
(New York, 1951), p. 219.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

According to the 1950 Census, the present population of the aged was more than 12 millions, which was 8 per cent of the total population of the United States. The aged population has increased tremendously during the last decade. There were in the New York City area 7,891,957 aged persons past sixty-five and more than 880,000 past sixty. There were large numbers of older persons in Central Harlem for whom there had been no social planning except those material needs which were met by OAA, OASI and BA benefits.

The Red Shield Club attempted to gear its activities to meet the needs of older persons participating in its recreational program. The focus, however, was not on the activities, but on the individual and the interpersonal relationships of the group members.

The purpose of this study was to describe the administration of the total program for the aged at the Salvation Army Red Shield Club, and further to ascertain needs and interests of a selected number of older persons; to analyze recreation and group work services. Also, it was the purpose of this study to suggest further areas where more emphasis might be placed upon program development and individual participation with the older person. This study was confined to the six months the writer was a student at the Salvation Army Red Shield Club and worked with the program for the aged. Only fifty of the 200 members who attended daily were included in the study.

This study revealed that in the year 1943, members of the New York



Mission Society saw the need for a recreational program in Central Harlem for the older persons and established the Senior Women's Community Club. This Club became a leisure time outlet for some 200 aged women. The number of aged women attending the Club outgrew the space made available for their activities, therefore, it was necessary to find larger quarters for their program.

The Central Harlem Council for Community Planning, the local regional council of the Welfare Council, became interested in the program and requested that the Salvation Army take over the Project since the Greater New York Fund was withdrawing its support. The project was moved to the Salvation Army Red Shield Club in September, 1946. At that time men were admitted to participate in the program for the first time and the name of the Club was changed to "The Senior People's Community Club," which included all older persons over sixty years of age. Membership in 1946 was between 200 and 250, in 1952, 1000 with present daily attendance of from 200 to 250.

Registration was a continuous process which was free and open to all persons over sixty years of age regardless to race, color or creed. Referrals to New York City Department of Welfare, New York City Health Department and the Social Security Board were made as part of intake in follow-up of members' problems. Other referral sources were other members, doctors, friends, ministers, hospitals, and health clinics.

1. The facilities of the Red Shield Club included:

- Elevator service for older persons
- A lounge and snack bar on the first floor
- Game room and Chapel on the second floor
- Arts and crafts room and lounge on the third floor

2. Leadership and administration of the older persons' program included:

Executive director	An adult teacher
Assistant director	A health worker
One full time case worker	Five graduate students
Two group workers	

3. The study further revealed that at the time of registration, as a part of service to individuals, each had an opportunity to belong to a committee which was instrumental in building program and setting policy.

For example, such committees as:

Executive	Religious
Contact	Hobby Shop
Membership	Refreshment
Finance	Entertainment
Sick	House and Decorations
Newspaper	

4. The characteristics of the fifty older persons revealed that:

Two-thirds of the members were Negroes. Of the fifty persons interviewed, forty-one were women and nine were men. The majority of the older persons were Protestants.

Their ages ranged from sixty-five to eighty-nine years. Twelve of the members were foreign born. Nine had no schooling; twenty-seven had completed grades three through eight; eleven had completed grades nine through twelve; two had two years of college training; and one had completed four years of college.

Living arrangements were of such that the majority of the older persons lived alone in furnished rooms and separated from their immediate families.

In this group five were widowers, two were married but separated, one was married, three were single, and thirty-nine were widows.

These older persons were of low economic status, many of them recipients of OAA and OASI benefits.

Other characteristics.--The eating arrangements of the older persons were found to be inadequate as thirty-five prepared their own meals, ten ate in restaurants, and five had meals prepared by relatives or friends. As older people grow older, there is a degree of illness that is expected and many disabilities were encountered by these older persons. For example:

Heart Trouble  
Arthritis  
High Blood Pressure  
Rheumatism

Asthma  
Paralysis  
Diabetes  
Gall Bladder Trouble

5. It was found that Recreation Activities, Group Work and Counseling Services were used at the Red Shield Club to meet the needs and interests of fifty older persons. Recreation Service was rendered through such activities as:

Games  
Music  
Dramatics  
Arts and Crafts  
Hobbies  
Outings  
Needlecrafts  
Fine Arts

Poetry Reading  
Creative Writing  
Film Forum  
Current Events  
Community Singing  
Birthday Party  
Open House  
Personal Interviews

6. Special interest groups (smaller groups) in general were helpful in fulfilling essential needs, building close relationships, exchanging ideas, learning new skills and developing creative self-expression. Program activities planned around special kinds of needs, interests, and experiences had definite value for the older persons. Through the use of group work method in recreational activities, it was found that the older persons were helped to:

Participate in democratic planning through the small group.

Develop skills as with Mr. K., who developed his skill in reading.

Experience a feeling of "belonging" as in the case of Mrs. K., who was unable to verbalize or manifest her needs and interests until she had gained some status and recognition in the group.

Enjoy diversified program of both recreation and informal education.

Bring in resource persons for the religious services.

Through counseling services, the case worker, furnished by the New York City Department of Welfare, interviewed the older persons and en-

couraged him to talk freely about any situation that was troubling him.

The counseling services rendered to the older persons at Red Shield Club were:

- Assistance in budget planning
- Aid in health problems by referrals to medical sources
- Help in providing adequate living arrangements

Recommendations based on observations of and interviews with the fifty older persons were as follows:

A need for at least three professional group workers to be assigned exclusively to the older persons' program.

More space is needed for a more effective program for the older persons; and this space should be convenient for them to reach. Preferably on the first or second floor.

More emphasis should be placed on personal counseling. There is need for a specialist in homemaker services to help the older persons plan adequately in accordance with their budget.

## APPENDIX

### SCHEDULE USED IN MAKING THE STUDY

## SCHEDULE

Date\_\_\_\_\_

Name\_\_\_\_\_Date of Birth\_\_\_\_\_Sex\_\_\_\_\_

Address\_\_\_\_\_Telephone\_\_\_\_\_

Birthplace\_\_\_\_\_Race\_\_\_\_\_Religion\_\_\_\_\_

Social Security Number\_\_\_\_\_Birth Certificate\_\_\_\_\_

Years in U. S. A.\_\_\_\_\_Years in N. Y. C.\_\_\_\_\_

Educational Background\_\_\_\_\_

Are you a registered voter? Yes ( ) No ( )

Living Arrangements:

Do you live in your own home?\_\_\_\_\_An Apartment\_\_\_\_\_

Rooming house\_\_\_\_\_Hotel\_\_\_\_\_Home for the aged\_\_\_\_\_

Other\_\_\_\_\_With whom do you live?\_\_\_\_\_

How many rooms are there in your abode?\_\_\_\_\_Do you prepare your  
own meals?\_\_\_\_\_Eat at home or at a restaurant\_\_\_\_\_

Usually, how many meals do you eat per day?\_\_\_\_\_

Marital Status:

Widowed\_\_\_\_\_Married but separated\_\_\_\_\_Single\_\_\_\_\_

Have been\_\_\_\_\_Married once\_\_\_\_\_Twice\_\_\_\_\_

Three times\_\_\_\_\_More\_\_\_\_\_How many children do you have

living\_\_\_\_\_Male\_\_\_\_\_Ages\_\_\_\_\_

Female\_\_\_\_\_

Occupation:

What jobs have you held for less than a year since you were sixty?\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

At which did you work longest?\_\_\_\_\_

Which did you enjoy most?\_\_\_\_\_

Name jobs you have wanted to get but have been unable to do so\_\_\_\_\_

For what reasons were you unable to secure these jobs?\_\_\_\_\_

Why did you want them?\_\_\_\_\_

How are you presently employed?\_\_\_\_\_

What are your chief means of support?\_\_\_\_\_

What is your weekly or monthly income?\_\_\_\_\_

What is the estimated cost of your lodging per week or monthly?\_\_\_\_\_

Your food or board?\_\_\_\_\_Your Car fare and incidental ex-

penses\_\_\_\_\_Do you consider your present income adequate?\_\_\_\_\_

Health:

How would you rate your health at the present time: Good\_\_\_\_\_

Fair\_\_\_\_\_Poor\_\_\_\_\_Is your health better or worse than it was

before you started coming to the agency?\_\_\_\_\_

What are your serious problems?\_\_\_\_\_

How many days did you spend in bed last year?\_\_\_\_\_Because of

what?\_\_\_\_\_

Leisure and Recreation:

Free Time (underline) Has all day, half day, a few hours, almost none.

Name activities in which you engage when you are not at the agency (movies, church activities, neighborhood clubs, etc., specify):\_\_\_\_\_

What year did you start coming to the agency?\_\_\_\_\_

How did you find out about the agency?\_\_\_\_\_

List activities in which you engaged at the agency (Religious, Arts and Crafts, Birthday Parties, Community Singing, etc., Specify):\_\_\_\_\_

Do you attend these activities occasionally or regularly?\_\_\_\_\_

Which do you enjoy most?\_\_\_\_\_

List activities which you would like to engage in but which are not offered at the agency\_\_\_\_\_

Do you believe there should be other facilities made available for elderly people to get together? Yes ( ) No ( )

Do you use the Counseling Service at the agency? Yes ( ) No ( ) If so, which area has been helpful to you? Check

- A. Family Relations
- B. Budget or Financial Problems
- C. Medical or Health Problems

Would you be interested in attending meetings or help in planning them?  
(underline)

Do you feel that you have been helped emotionally since coming to the agency? If so, in what way?\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



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